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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2025  
TAGS: [EFIS](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [NZ](#) [FJ](#) [AS](#) [XV](#)  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER MCCULLY DISCUSSES FIJI AND  
PACIFIC CONCERNS WITH DEPARTING AMBASSADOR

Classified By: DCM David J. Keegan for E.O. 12958, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) The Ambassador paid his introductory and farewell call on newly appointed Foreign Minister Murray McCully December 15. They agreed that there had been dramatic improvement in our bilateral relationship during Ambassador McCormick's tenure due to the efforts of many leaders in both governments. McCully said he had taken the opportunity of the recent APEC meetings in Lima to thank Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill personally.

¶2. (C) Early in the conversation, FM McCully said that he anticipated that New Zealand's acting High Commissioner to Suva might be expelled shortly. He explained that during the recent trip of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) foreign ministers to Fiji he had been summoned to the office of acting Prime Minister Bainimarama. Bainimarama had said that Fiji was still waiting for New Zealand to issue a student visa for the son of the President's Private Secretary. If the visa were not issued Fiji would expel the High Commissioner. McCully said that the visa applicant had had a student visa to New Zealand before and might well qualify on his own, but he fell under the visa prohibition against members of the interim government and their families. McCully made it clear that he considered Bainimarama's threat to be an effort to intimidate the New Zealand's new National Government, and the Government would not buckle. In the next day or two he would be drafting a response with the bad news, and he expected the High Commissioner's expulsion to follow soon after. He expressed the hope that the U.S. would support New Zealand if these events occurred. The Ambassador made it clear that we understood New Zealand's situation and supported its response. Embassy Wellington understands that Ambassador McGann in Fiji has informed Washington that he stands ready to express our disapproval if Bainimarama moves toward such an action.

¶3. (SBU) The Ambassador said that New Zealand's role in the Pacific is one which the United States highly values. He highlighted the importance of our working with the Pacific Island Countries to address issues such as sustainable fisheries and renewable energy. McCully said that the new National Government is looking at what steps it can take to bring a new intensity and focus to these efforts. Ambassador McCormick urged New Zealand particularly to consider the value of taking the lead with the U.S. in renewable energy efforts. He suggested that the installation of even a single wind turbine on each Pacific island would remind governments and peoples of our continuing commitment to them. McCully said that he fully shared that sentiment. He said that he had heard Australian Prime Minister Rudd had suggest that Australia and New Zealand were spending one billion dollars between them in the Pacific, and they needed to be sure that they were actually buying something with that expenditure.

¶4. (SBU) McCully concluded the call by saying that he looked forward to visiting Washington at an appropriate time, and he would defer to us on what the best time might be.

